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ABSTRACT

This newsletter includes five articles on immigrant education that focus on successful school programs and educational policy issues. In "Immigrant Education from the Administrators' Perspective" (Pam McCollum, Juanita Garcia), three principals of south Texas secondary schools with successful immigrant programs discuss their views on the adequacy of their college course work, student registration, student records, assessment and placement, appropriate counseling services, and referral for social services. "Creative Collaboratives: Empowering Immigrant Students and Families through Education" (Josie Danini Supik, Albert Cortez) describes programs in El Paso and Houston that link secondary schools and universities in efforts to improve immigrant education. Project findings point to the importance of teacher training and administrative support for the implementation of change strategies. "Immigrant Education Policy: Why Attempt To Fix What's Not Broken?" (Albert Cortez) presents facts about immigration and its impact on educational costs that counter misconceptions underlying efforts to deny public education to undocumented immigrant children. "CHIME (Clearinghouse for Immigrant Education): Service Provides Access to Information on the Education of Immigrant Students" (Aurelio M. Montemayor) describes CHIME's services and collection of resources on immigrant education. "Dispelling Myths about Immigrant Students" (Abel Carmona) examines common misconceptions about the impacts of immigrants on the U.S. economy, employment of native-born workers, welfare services, and schools, and about immigrants' education level and work skills. (SV)

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IDRA Newsletter

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IMMIGRANT EDUCATION

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IDRA is an independent nonprofit advocacy organization dedicated to improving educational opportunity. Through research, materials development, training, technical assistance, evaluation, and information dissemination, we're helping to create schools that work for all children.

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RC 020646

IMMIGRANT EDUCATION FROM THE ADMINISTRATORS' PERSPECTIVE

Pam McCollum, Ph.D. and Juanita Garcia, M.A.

The lives of secondary level immigrant students are extremely complex because they undergo change in many dimensions in their lives at once. Not only are they grappling with obvious linguistic and cultural differences, but they must also learn the institutional culture of school in order to be successful. Less visible, but equally important are the developmental changes they are undergoing as they approach adulthood. These are all formidable tasks to be accomplished within the four-year time frame of high school, and thus, drop out rates for immigrant students are high.

Problems contributing to the high drop out rates are the following:

- Shortage of school personnel trained to meet the specific needs of secondary immigrant students;
- A school structure that does not ensure smooth transitions from program to program, school to school, or school to work;
- A school system that fails to give immigrant students access to academic concepts and skills;
- Lack of appropriate assessment policies and procedures for immigrant students;
- Few curricular and programmatic alternatives for late entrant students who need to develop language, academic and life skills to prepare them for options beyond high school;
- Little support for school staff (financial resources or extra time) to work together to make necessary changes (Center for Applied Linguistics, 1996).

This article is intended to share the knowledge of three successful, experienced school principals who direct schools with large populations of recent immigrant students. Unlike many who view immigrant education negatively, these principals have a history of approaching the education of immigrant students in ways that ease their entry into a sometimes unwelcoming school system. These principals are: Clyde Hough of Jane Long Middle School in Houston, Texas; Tonie Kreye of Guillen Middle School in El Paso, Texas; and Paul Strelzin of Bowie High School in El Paso, Texas.

We came to know these principals through their involvement with the Texas Immigrant Education Collaborative (TIEC), which began in 1994 and is funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Program in Immigrant Education. IDRA is one of four recipients of funding for projects designed to improve immigrant education through three broad goals:

- improving English language and literacy development;
- improving mastery of academic content and skills; and
- improving access to post-secondary opportunities (including preparation for higher education and the world of work).

The project is conducted through implementation teams composed of teachers, administrators, district personnel, representatives from higher education, the business community and community-based organizations. The teams work to address the three broad goals of the project as well as to articulate objectives that are specific to

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Popularized in the early 1970s by author Thomas Kuhn, "paradigms" are our models or patterns of reality, shaped by our understanding and experience into a system of rules and assumptions about the world around us. The call for restructuring in education, emerging from a profound sense that education is not working for all children, requires a transformation in how we see schools, students, and their families. If we are to find a new and equitable vision of what education can and should be, new lenses are required to change the way we look at schools and the populations in them – as demonstrated by our "Now" thinkers below.

THAT IS THEN . . . THIS IS NOW . . .

"[My] legislation...is an attempt to give states the ability not to reward illegal immigrants by offering them a free education in exchange for violating federal immigration laws."

– Rep. Elton Gallegly (R-Calif.), "No 'Papers,' No School for Illegals: Let Each State Decide Whether Its Citizen-taxpayers Want to Reward Lawbreakers This Way," *Los Angeles Times*, May 14, 1996

"Such practices [that deny public education] victimize innocent children. Children of undocumented workers do not choose the conditions under which they enter the United States. They should not be punished for circumstances they do not control."

– IDRA Alert, "Unconstitutional Measures Threaten to Slam Doors on Children of Undocumented Workers," 1996

"What makes sense; to keep subsidizing this education of illegal alien children and having more and more and more children come from all over the world? That makes no sense at all...Let us not spend all of our money on illegal aliens' children and then attract more and more here until our system totally breaks down."

– Dana Rohrabacher (R-Calif.), floor debate, U.S. House of Representatives, March 20, 1996

"I believe we ought to educate the children. [Proposition] 187 to some means illegal immigration in general... We ought to enforce the border. But whether or not we ought to educate the children is a different question. And we should."

– Texas Governor George W. Bush, November 1995

"Given that a lot of these children [illegal immigrants] are in the process of becoming documented, I think it's positive that people recognize that they should be educated."

– Lee Teran, co-director of the immigration and human rights clinic at St. Mary's University. Quoted in *San Antonio Express News*, February 19, 1995

"Forget their [immigrants of the 1990s] indifference to learning our language, history, and customs – many are qualified for the most menial positions."

– Don Feder, columnist, *San Antonio Express News*, October 6, 1995

"[The] bosom of America is open to receive not only the opulent and respectable stranger, but the oppressed and persecuted of all nations and religions, whom we shall welcome to a participation of all our rights and privileges."

– George Washington, (1731-1802)

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Creative Collaboratives: Empowering Immigrant Students and Families Through Education

Josie Danini Supik, M.A. and Albert Cortez, Ph.D.

The Texas Immigrant Education Collaborative (TIEC) began its work in the spring of 1994 with the vision that U.S. schools with significant populations of immigrant students provide a collaborative environment where all students are prepared to become productive citizens capable of making significant contributions to our emerging global community. Created in response to the urgent needs of recent immigrant students, the Texas collaborative, led by the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA), is one of four projects in the United States funded for four years by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Program in Immigrant Education and coordinated with the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL).

Our goal was clear: Create schools that work for recent immigrants by accelerating their mastery of literacy, expanding access to the content areas, and strengthening the connections to work and post-secondary opportunities. In the final analysis, our work would result in schools:

- becoming *acutely* aware of immigrant student needs;
- creating more effective strategies and programs in schools;
- restructuring campuses with improved services to students and families; and
- creating new or stronger relationships between elementary and secondary schools, secondary schools and post-secondary schools, central office administrations and campuses, and schools and the community.

With IDRA's 20-plus years of experience in immigrant education and advocacy of children, coupled with our vanguard professional development and technical assistance and tremendous commitment from our partner schools, extraordinary results are already evident:

- New linkages between the secondary schools, universities and world of work;
- Increased awareness among school participants of the needs, characteristics, and potential of recent immigrant students;
- New structures within schools that support recent immigrant students;
- Decision-makers and stakeholders within schools connecting with each other in new ways, seeking mechanisms to ensure the success of recent immigrant students through their school system;
- New identification and placement systems for recent immigrant students that take into account all that they bring rather than what they lack;
- A peer support network of English as a second language (ESL) teachers that promotes interdependence and leadership; and
- New opportunities for immigrant students. In one of the participating schools, 25 students were placed in the gifted and talented program this year, that is 25 more than the previous year.

Already evident is a notable shift in the participants' mindsets and creation of a positive collective consciousness that will move the school forward in positive new directions. This is based on a commitment to having all students, including those who are new arrivals to this country, be successful.

The partner schools are in El Paso, Texas (Bowie High School, Guillen Middle School and the University of Texas at El Paso) and in Houston, Texas (Jane Long Middle School and the University of Houston-Downtown).

The Project's Organizational Structure

In the spring of 1994, IDRA began a deliberate and careful process of increasing awareness, building linkages and creating ownership among the different groups involved in the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation project collaborative. In order to maximize the potential for local ownership, IDRA created a two tier organizational structure that allowed it to oversee all aspects of program activities while at the same time maximizing local participation in decision making and implementation of project initiatives.

Activities at each of the two school districts were designed and coordinated by a campus implementation team that included the local liaison, members of the school faculty, representatives from the campus administration, a representative from the local college or university project partners, and at least one representative from a community-based organization.

During the project's first 18 months, the implementation teams at each site chose to sub-divide their efforts among various task forces that included members of the implementation team and other school or community-based persons. Once assembled, each team identified the recent immigrant student needs on their campuses with an eye to their future in the university and workforce. With IDRA facilitating, each team created a site-specific work plan for meeting needs in areas such as the school's:

- placement and monitoring system,
- Spanish literacy course,
- intensive ESL training,
- organizational structure,
- support services,
- parental involvement and leadership,
- counseling,
- feeder school relations,
- vocational programs, and
- business partnerships.

It is important to note that IDRA *facilitated* the conceptualization and development process of each work plan. We did not dictate or give expert "pronouncements." Our effectiveness with schools comes from shared ownership and negotiating our environment in such a way that all members contribute and are valued.

The Context

Each of the two project school districts and their cities is unique and remarkable in their character.

El Paso, Texas: Bowie High School

El Paso, like other cities along the U.S.-Mexico border, felt the aftershocks of the Mexican peso devaluation in mid-December of 1994. Everything from a quart of milk to diapers costs much more, 40 percent more. The devaluation impacted everyone and everything. And the impact continues. Merchants estimate that business

Creative Collaboratives *- continued on page 10*

IMMIGRANT EDUCATION POLICY: WHY ATTEMPT TO FIX WHAT'S NOT BROKEN?

Albert Cortez, Ph.D.

In our many years of working together, I remember how Dr. Jose Cárdenas periodically would tell us the story of the child who received a hammer as a gift and subsequently "discovered" that many things around him needed a few taps with his new found instrument (whether the object to be hammered needed the tapping or not). Recent developments in Washington, D.C., related to the education of children of undocumented workers bring to mind that child as some lawmakers seek to re-visit an issue that states and the courts resolved over a decade ago.

The impetus for re-surfacing the issue of whether or not children of undocumented workers should have access to education in U.S. public schools came from members of Congress from California who had been thwarted in their efforts to deny children access to education through a state referendum, Proposition 187 (which the federal district courts found violates the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Plyler vs. Doe*). So, they sought to involve others in their exclusionary quest. Congressman Elton Gallegly from California thus introduced an amendment to HR 2022, a comprehensive immigration reform proposal originally introduced by Congressman Lamar Smith of Texas. The Gallegly amendment was approved by a vote that closely followed partisan lines.

Senate leaders opted to leave the controversial measure out of their version of the immigration reform bill. Currently, a conference committee is convening to reconcile the House and Senate versions. Media reports indicate that President Clinton is expected to sign the final bill, but the White House has expressed concern over some provisions – including the proposal that would deny children access to an education – and is pressing for changes when the conference committee meets (Lacey, 1996).

Illogical Rationale

As IDRA tracked the debates around the immigrant education issue, we noted the rationale used to defend this punitive and discriminatory treatment of immigrant children. Proponents of the measure justified their position by suggesting that the *Plyler vs. Doe* decision had rested in part on the "lack" of a clear position by the Congress on the issue of immigrant children's access to education. They contend that the new amendment makes explicit a congressional position that leaves the decision to provide or deny access to education strictly to the states (civil rights issues and due process concerns notwithstanding).

Conveniently, the proposal leaves the decision to deny access to children of undocumented workers to the states. Perhaps the reason is to ensure that the inevitable legal challenges that follow are directed to the state governments (versus federal government). Perhaps it is to ensure that any political fallout associated with such inhumane treatment of children can be blamed on someone other than those who merely set the stage for subsequent state action. Possibly, it could be to set a defense for a cut-off of federal funding for immigrant impact aid, since the states would themselves be responsible for all future enrollments of all immigrant students.

Whatever the rationale, if the exclusionary legislation is adopted, it will re-surface the bitter debates that surrounded the initial debate of the issue in the 1980s. We have learned much about immigrant education in the decade since the *Plyler vs. Doe* decision, and we should consider those lessons before we attempt to un-do rational public policies.

Lessons Learned

The numbers are never what anti-immigrant proponents claim. Much of the debate around immigrant student enrollment focuses on the estimated numbers and the presumed effects that these enrollments have on local public schools. There is no consensus on actual numbers, but history has demonstrated that proponents of exclusion are not hesitant to use grossly inflated figures.

In the Texas case, the proponents of exclusion estimated that more than 100,000 children of undocumented workers would enroll in Texas public schools. When required to admit them, the total enrollment of such children (as reported to the state agency by local school districts) totaled less than 16,000. This is 16 percent of the number first touted (Cortez, 1981). Not only were the numbers far less than that originally claimed, but the number of schools actually enrolling immigrant students also represented less than a quarter of Texas' 1060 school systems.

The savings are also a fraction of the amounts often predicted by anti-immigrant groups. Since the actual numbers of immigrant students enrolling in schools turn out be to a fraction of those estimated, states do not experience the inflated cost estimates used to justify the exclusion of children. If all immigrant pupils had been excluded from Texas schools, the net savings available for each student still enrolled in Texas schools would have come to less than $15 per pupil. When this is divided by the 200-plus instructional days, this net savings would come to 7.5¢ per pupil per day.

Immigrant families are unlikely to alter their plans based on state education policies. While Texas was in the midst of enforcing its exclusionary doctrine in the years before the legal challenge to this practice, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) did not report any major decrease in the number of immigrants coming to the United States.

Contrary to some misguided assumptions, immigrants come to the country seeking employment and opportunity. They do not come so their children can attend U.S. schools. Earlier, while some families expressed concern about the state's exclusionary practices, there was no great exodus from Texas as a result of the enforcement of the state's discriminatory treatment of immigrants. The assumption that giving states the option of denying schooling to young children will contribute to reduced migration remains unsubstantiated and misguided.

Education Policy *– continued on page 5*

Education Policy *- continued from page 4*

The costs of exclusion may actually exceed any small benefits derived. Even conservative groups representing local law enforcement recognize the dysfunctional affects of keeping students out of school and thus in unsupervised settings while parents are away at work. Major national groups have expressed their concerns about the proposed new policies, citing the unintended consequences associated with having thousands of unsupervised youth left out of school with nothing to fill their time. While the numbers remain in dispute, any number of school age youth denied access to the system can create disruptions in local communities (witness the concerns expressed by shopping mall owners and downtown merchants about out-of-school youths in many communities throughout the country). The problem that would only be exacerbated by denying youth access to local public schooling.

Such Measures are Unconstitutional

In the 1982 *Plyler vs. Doe* decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that it is unconstitutional to deny children access to public education because of their citizenship status. When the Gallegly amendment was debated, IDRA distributed an informational alert about this and similar measures. The alert stated that the Supreme Court arrived at its decision because such practices:

- **Victimize innocent children** - Children of undocumented workers do not choose the conditions under which they enter the United States. They should not be punished for circumstances they do not control. Children have the right to learn and be useful members of society.
- **Hurt more than they claim to help** - Denying children access to education will not eliminate illegal immigration. Instead, it ensures the creation of an underclass. Without public education for children, illiteracy rates will increase, and opportunities for workforce and community participation will decrease. Research has proven that for every $1 spent on the education of children, $9 is returned.
- **Turn public school teachers and officials into INS agents** - Rather than teaching students, school officials could spend their time asking our 44 million school children about their citizenship status. States will be forced to spend millions of dollars to do the work of the INS.

IDRA BELIEVES THAT EDUCATION IS A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT AND THAT EDUCATION SHOULD BE AVAILABLE TO ALL CHILDREN. TO DENY EVEN ONE CHILD SUCH ACCESS IS BAD PUBLIC POLICY.

- **Promote misinformation** - Incorrect assumptions and inappropriate figures have been used to blame immigrants and their children for economic problems. In 1992, undocumented immigrants comprised only 1.3 percent of the total U.S. population.
- **Support racism and discrimination** - Historically, financially troubled times breed increased racism. Children of undocumented workers should not be the scapegoats.

"Denying children of undocumented workers access to an education is unconstitutional and against the law," the alert stated.

If Not Based on Rationality and if Unconstitutional, Then Why Proceed?

If the consequences far outweigh the benefits, then why do some push the change in public policy. Several thoughts come to mind. Official frustration over control of immigration has led some to look for easy "solutions," with immigrant children perceived among the most helpless and thus easy to victimize. The fact that some school officials and staff complain about immigrant enrollments in some communities serve only to exacerbate existing tendencies.

The notion that denial of education will somehow discourage immigration is also a contributing factor, despite the fact that no research exists that substantiates such assumptions.

Exclusionary practices targeting children may also be perceived as politically easier to promote than other options. Some proponents of immigration reform have long argued that the way to discourage undocumented immigration is by creating mechanisms that impact the employment prospects for those who enter the country illegally. One idea supported by many includes employer sanctions aimed at discouraging those who hire undocumented workers. Such efforts however are often met with fierce opposition from private sector interests who depend on immigrant labor. Immigrant children have no lobbyists to ensure their rights.

In addition to what is known or has been learned in the wake of the *Plyler vs. Doe* decision are our fundamental beliefs about children, justice and simple decency. Should anyone propose that *our* children be denied some things as basic as an education, we could anticipate a general uproar. Why would it be acceptable then to discriminate against *some* children?

IDRA believes that education is a fundamental right and that education should be available to all children. To deny even one child such access is bad public policy. To allow states the prerogative to exclude any child access to education is also bad policy, dysfunctional and counter-productive. Add to it the complexities required to enforce exclusion and the unintended consequences for students and communities, and it becomes apparent that current attempts to "fix" immigration by victimizing children will not work. While many educators and children's advocates have let their voices be heard over the din that is contemporary Washington, all of us who are concerned about children must be prepared to add our own voices to the national conversation. While it may be in vogue to question past public policies, we should never let go unchallenged fundamental beliefs about children's rights.

In explaining the basis for his decision on education funding equity litigation, Judge Scott McCown observed that while some worried only about providing an adequate education for "their children," all school age persons in Texas were the responsibility of the state of Texas – thus *all* children were *our* children (McCown, 1987). Immigrant students who find themselves residing in Texas (and other states) simply because they are part of an immigrant family, also happen to be *our* children. We must speak out more loudly in their defense. For, if we – educators who see their faces every day and those who see their hopes, fears, joys, aspirations and heartbreaks – do not speak, then who will?

Resources

Cortez, Albert. "The Distribution of Undocumented Pupils in Texas Public Schools: A First Analysis," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, August 1981).

McCown, Judge Scott. *Edgewood ISD, et al. vs. Kirby, et al.* (1987).

Lacey, Marc. "Senate Approves Broad Assault on Illegal Immigration," *Los Angeles Times* (May 3, 1996).

Dr. Albert Cortez is director of the IDRA Institute for Policy and Leadership and acting director of the IDRA Division of Professional Development.

CHIME (Clearinghouse for Immigrant Education): Service Provides Access to Information on the Education of Immigrant Students

Aurelio M. Montemayor, M.Ed.

Schools and communities are experiencing rapid social change as they work to lay the foundation for the future of U.S. society. Teachers and administrators attempt to meet the diverse needs of both the growing population of U.S.-born children of color and newly-arrived, foreign born children. Immigrant parents struggle to comprehend a new culture and language while trying to understand an unfamiliar system of public education. Immigrant children are caught in the middle, providing culture and language translations for their parents and families, seeking to build social relations with U.S.-born children and young immigrants from other lands, and struggling against great odds to succeed in school. In our public schools we must teach students to respect all languages, cultures and peoples. We must capitalize on the cultural diversity to expand democracy.

What is CHIME?

Building a U.S. society where all cultures, languages and peoples are respected requires information and hard work. To support this important work, the National Coalition of Advocates for Students has established CHIME (Clearinghouse for Immigrant Education). CHIME is an interactive clearinghouse and networking service that facilitates access to educational materials, organizations and individuals concerned with the effective education of immigrant students. CHIME is available to assist schools, parents, advocates and others who support the school success of immigrant students and who are working to build a multicultural society.

This national center collects timely and current research on issues affecting communities today, such as parental involvement, evaluation and placement of immigrant and LEP students, culturally appropriate support services and multicultural education. Also available is information on the cultural background of many immigrant groups that can help educators understand the background experiences and strengths immigrant children bring with them to the classroom. The center has also recently expanded to include materials written for parents in support of the Mobilization for Equity project – a project by IDRA and others funded by the Ford Foundation and the National Coalition of Advocates for Students to engage the public and parents in achieving the best possible education for all students. These materials explain educational issues in a language that is easy to understand, and many are translated into Spanish. A few materials are written in Vietnamese, Chinese and Haitian-Kreyol.

CHIME/NCAS
100 Boylston Street, Suite 737
Boston, Mass. 02116

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How Does CHIME Work?

By calling CHIME's toll-free number, you can access an expanding collection of resources to improve the educational experience of foreign-born children. For fast, easy access to resources on educating immigrant students, this is the resource to contact. Whether educator, parent or interested citizen, you can receive information and resources on how schools can better serve immigrant students and their families. To participate, you can also write to CHIME at the address below.

CHIME staff members will become your partners in problem solving. They will survey the available resources, help you to make networking connections and provide information about how to order relevant documents. For documents, there is a nominal fee to cover duplication, shipping and handling. Other services are free, including complimentary copies of the newsletter *New Voices* and annotated bibliographies.

The CHIME Collection

The CHIME collection includes the following:

- **Literature**: Continually expanding compendium of articles and research evaluated and abstracted on a wide range of topics relevant to immigrant students.
- **Promising Practices**: Written descriptions of successful efforts developed by schools and community-based organizations that serve substantial immigrant student populations.
- **Resource Listing**: A national listing of resource centers, community-based organizations and individuals with resources, experience or knowledge to share.
- **Publications**: Annotated bibliographies developed periodically on specific topics in immigrant education. Entitled *Selected Readings from CHIME*, these resource lists are available to CHIME users free of charge, as is the quarterly newsletter, *New Voices*.

CHIME is a service of the National Center for Immigrant Students which is a program of the National Coalition of Advocates for Students (NCAS). NCAS is a nation-wide network of 23 experienced child advocacy organizations that work to improve access to quality education for all students, particularly those who are poor, members of racial and linguistic minority groups, people who have recently immigrated to the United States, and people who are physically challenged. IDRA is a member organization of NCAS.

In 1988, NCAS published *New Voices: Immigrant Students in U.S. Public Schools*, the first comprehensive examination of the status of young newcomers in the nation's public schools. NCAS established the National Center for Immigrant Students in 1990 to stimulate networking and information-sharing, expand advocacy on behalf of foreign-born students, and examine emerging federal, state and local policy likely to impact upon their school success.

Advice on immigrant education issues is provided to the National Center for Immigrant Students by a national advisory panel of leaders from many different immigrant communities across the country.

Principal funding for the National Center for Immigrant Students and for CHIME is provided by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Ford Foundation.

Aurelio Montemayor is the lead trainer in the IDRA Division of Professional Development.

Dispelling Myths About Immigrant Students

Abel Carmona, B.A.

One of the most controversial political and economic issues in the United States today is the impact immigrants entering the country will have on the population. Some people believe immigrants are an uneducated, unskilled burden on our economy and take advantage of many of the government funded programs established for the benefit of U.S. citizens. Opponents of the U.S. policy on immigration believe that "drastic steps" must be taken to curb the number of immigrants entering the United States. Politicians are expressing their willingness to support measures that would close the borders and deny children of undocumented workers an education. There continues to be a movement to make English the official language of the country known throughout the world as the "nation of immigrants." In California, for example, the citizens passed legislation restricting government funded programs from serving undocumented immigrants, and other states are attempting to implement similar measures.

Unfortunately, many of these xenophobic attitudes and false negative beliefs about immigrants are fueled more by media hype and people's fears about the economy than by reality. History has shown us that as the economy declines, immigrants become less and less popular and to some degree are blamed for the economy's sluggishness. How accurate and fair are these myths? Does the immigrant population of today differ that much from that of the past? Does it really constitute such a great burden on our economy? Are they as uneducated as they are perceived and do they unfairly benefit from government funded program established for "Americans?"

Economy and Jobs

It is true that the number of immigrants entering the United States is increasing. There are many people who believe that because our present economy does not appear to be able to support the current native U.S. population, the added influx of immigrants would not only hurt our economy but would also create unemployment and financial hardships for many U.S. citizens. What they fail to see is that as the immigrant population creates more demands on the economy, the economy adjusts accordingly and even spawns the creation of new industries to meet those demands.

As for those skeptics who claim the immigrant population will "steal" jobs from native workers, "there is no empirical evidence documenting that the displacement effect [of natives from jobs] is numerically important" (Borjas, 1990).

Studies show that immigrants contribute to the economy through tax payments, job creation, entrepreneurial activity, consumer spending and neighborhood revitalization. The Alexis de Toqueville Institute states that immigrants also create jobs by raising the productivity of U.S. businesses (Wong, 1994). According to RAND and the U.S. Department of Labor:

> The immigrant workforce keeps labor-intensive industries competitive and helps keep jobs in our country. Immigrants made crucial contributions to the California economy over the last 20 years and have saved the furniture, garment and shoe industries in Southern California and the textile industries in Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco (Wong, 1994).

The Urban Institute states that immigrants add twice as many jobs to the country as does the native-born population and contribute to local employment more than non-immigrants (Wong, 1994). According to *Business Week*, "By setting up businesses and buying homes, immigrants generate both taxes and employment opportunities while encouraging further investment in the inner city" (Wong, 1994).

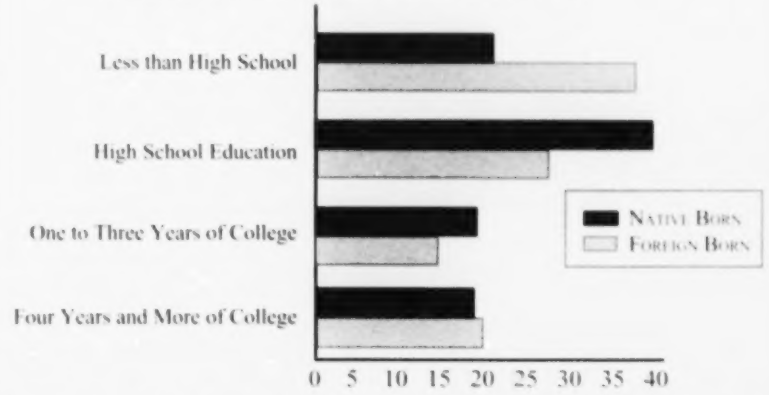
Public Assistance

In terms of how immigrants benefit from and contribute to government-funded programs, the majority of immigrants, because of their age, make proportionately larger contributions to the public fund than they will ever receive in terms of benefits. The cost of government services received by immigrants is significantly less than their contributions (Simon, 1995). According to a report by Michael Fix and Jeffrey S. Passel,

***Dispelling Myths** - continued on page 8*

Did you know?

Education Level of U.S. Foreign-Born Population and Native Born Population 20 Years Old, 1988


Less than High School
High School Education
One to Three Years of College
Four Years and More of College
Native Born
Foreign Born
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40

Sources: Amara Bachu, "Profile of the Foreign-Born Population in the United States," Studies in American Fertility, Series (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991).

In the early part of the 20th century, immigrants comprised nearly 15 percent of the U.S. population. In 1990, immigrants were only 8 percent of the U.S. population. Less than 1.5 percent of the U.S. population is undocumented.

U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990

Dispelling Myths *- continued from page 7*

immigrants create a surplus of $25 billion to $30 billion annually. Most do not qualify for social security benefits, and those who do are not granted public assistance until three years after their entry into the United States. Other studies – including reports by the California Research Bureau, the California State Office of Research, the U.S. Department of Labor, and the U.S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service – show that, despite high poverty rates, immigrants use less public benefits than average and are less likely to become dependent on welfare (Wong, 1994).

Education Level and Labor

Another false perception many people have of immigrants is that they are uneducated and unskilled. The immigrant population is similar to the U.S. population in that it includes people with varying degrees of education. Some have less than eight years of formal education and others have doctorates. The educational level of immigrants today is higher than those of the past and continues to improve. On average, the proportion of immigrants with post-graduate degrees is greater than the proportion of people with post-graduate degrees in the native population (Simon, 1995).

Just as the privileges that our society affords to its educated people serve as incentives for people to become educated, it also so serves as an incentive for some to emigrate here, even for those who are from countries as prosperous as this. As a consequence of this phenomenon, the United States has experienced a growth in our pool of people who excel in the technological fields such as engineering, mathematics and science (Stewart, 1993). With this growth, the United States has the potential of increasing its productivity and expanding into frontiers in many fields of study, particularly in technology and science.

Implications for Schools

In view of these facts, the negative myths of immigrants is unwarranted and unfair. Immigrants are educated, are skilled and do contribute positively to the U.S. economy.

As the influx of immigrants continues and the number of immigrant children enrolling in the public education system grows, educators will need to grow along with them. Statistics show that, in spite of the many obstacles immigrant children must overcome as new students in a new country, they persevere and some do as well if not better than U.S. natives. As they complete their public education, many choose to pursue their education further and enroll in colleges and universities. Interestingly, although immigrants are less likely to have graduated from high school, they are more likely to graduate from college when compared to the U.S. native population.

Many in the education field believe that "the education system is poorly prepared to meet the special needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students, and problems are especially acute in the secondary level," (Christian, 1994). The need for programs that are better able to educate children with varying cultural and ethnic backgrounds will require educators to create new and innovative means of educating these students.

In times like these it is especially important that organizations, such as IDRA, that are dedicated to improving the educational opportunities of *all* children, families and communities, to continue to serve as strong advocates of immigrant education and children, particularly those who are at a disadvantage through no fault of their own.

President Lamar of the Republic of Texas said in 1838, "It is admitted by all that a cultivated mind is the guardian of democracy and while controlled by virtue the noblest attribute of man." Although some people may believe the present attitudes concerning immigration are justified or rational, we should keep in mind that the Equal Protection Clause of the United States Constitution which affords us the right to an education also allows this protection to be "extended to all persons in the country, regardless of citizenship, residence or documented status" (Cárdenas, 1993).

Resources

Borjas, George J. *Friends or Strangers: The Impact of Immigrants on the U.S. Economy.* (New York, N.Y.: Basic Books, 1990).

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Fix, Michael and Jeffrey S. Passel. *Immigration and Immigrants: Setting the Record Straight* (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 1994).

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Stewart, David W. *Immigration and Education: The Crisis and the Opportunities.* (New York, N.Y.: Lexington Books, 1993).

Wong, Ronald. "Eye on Politics: The Four Ugly Lies About Immigrants," *Asian Week* (Stamford, Conn.: Ethnic NewsWatch, SoftLine Information Inc., February 11, 1994).

Abel Carmona is a research assistant in the IDRA Division of Research and Evaluation.

DESEGREGATION ASSISTANCE MODULES AVAILABLE

First and Second Language Acquisition Processes

by Frank Gonzales, Ph.D.

This training module is designed for trainers to assist classroom teachers in the processes a non-English-speaking student goes through as he or she acquires English as a second language. Use this tool to help participants become familiar with the nature of language and language proficiency, with the processes for acquiring the first and second languages and the interrelationship between the two, and with the English as a second language (ESL) categories. Participants can also acquire strategies for placing limited-English-proficient (LEP) students in the appropriate level and program of instruction. This 28-page module comes with session outlines, a pre/post test, and handout and transparency masters (ISBN 1-878550-10-1; 1996 Second Edition; $8.50).

Available from IDRA at 5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350, San Antonio, Texas 78228-1190; 210/684-8180; fax 210/684-5389; E-mail: cgoodman@txdirect.net.

SIGNS OF HOPE IN PROJECTS SCHOOL

Surrounded by gangs and graffiti, J.T. Brackenridge Elementary School is in the heart of one of America's first and oldest public housing projects. Its children and families constitute the nation's 11th-poorest census tract. Its students, parents and teachers, its administrators and staff, shoulder the tasks of learning and teaching against a tide of economic stress unseen and overlooked or ignored by most Americans. Signs of the strain are not hard to find. Confusion, anger, burn-out and despair happen.

But if one looks, signs of hope are also to be found. One sign is the absence of gang graffiti on or in the school. The school, one of the oldest in the city, was reconstructed some years ago. By agreement among the local gangs, the renovated school was declared off-limits to gang graffiti and gang violence.

Another sign of hope is the presence of graffiti on long strips of white butcher paper hung along one of the school's hallways. It is a paper and crayon mural, a hallscape of American dreams put together by students and parents as part of Children's Creative Response to Conflict, one of the school's many innovative programs.

Anyone looking for a bright star of hope in a midnight of discouragement might try reading and reflecting on the mural, its pictures and words. The mural projects the children's vision of the world they want: enough food for everyone; families that are happy and care for each other; clean air and water; lots of animals; you can leave keys in your car; good schools; graduating and getting a job. Black people, red people, yellow people, brown people, white people: We all love each other. Basketball courts. Friendship. Clean city. Parks where we can play. Beautiful gardens. Drug-free people. Clean houses. A clean ocean for whales. Neighbors who help each other. A college education. A clean world.

Sprinkled among the visions are action imperatives for achieving such a world: Keep the world clean; recycle; stop killing children in school; no cutting down trees; stop the wars; a clean, safe environment; stop the violence; help the people on the streets.

On the wall opposite the children's mural is a smaller one by their parents: a better life for my kids and all other kids in the world; safe schools; to see children love and not hate one another. One parent expressed hope that unconditioned love might go out to our children when they give us bad reports, to teachers when they don't understand our kids, to teenagers who are out on the street, to parents who have no interest in the education of their own kids.

American dreams like the dream of Martin Luther King Jr.; like those who wrote the U.S. Constitution and its preamble and hoped for justice. American dreams of American children and American parents. Dreams that, to become true, call for a new vision and hard work. Alongside the parent's mural on a poster board is a short poem:

"The world of tomorrow, they say when it comes,

Will free every city and town of its slums,

So if you like gardens where children can play,

Let's make the world of tomorrow today.

The world of tomorrow will care for its youth,

And teach them in all things to search for the truth.

So parents and children, together lets say,

Lets's make the world of tomorrow today."

Tom Koene is a poet activist who counsels children and parents in the Alazán-Apache Courts. Reprinted with permission from the San Antonio Express-News.

Reprinted with permission from John Branch of the *San Antonio Express-News*.

Creative Collaboratives *- continued from page 3*

has dropped as much as 80 percent and say this is because shoppers from Juarez cannot afford U.S. goods (Sciences, 1995). Only two months after the devaluation, more than 20 stores had gone out of business, and hundreds of employees were laid off or had their hours substantially reduced.

As if to make matters worse for businesses, immigration laws and regulations are being stepped up. Closer scrutiny of those wishing to cross from Juarez to El Paso has greatly reduced the number of undocumented Mexicans entering El Paso to shop.

The devaluation of the Mexican peso and its subsequent effects on the regional economy have tightened the job market even further for immigrant students.

Bowie High School is located just a few yards away from the barbed wire fence that separates the United States and Mexico. Along the fence, in clear view of the students and staff, are fully staffed border patrol cars. Border patrol helicopters sweep overhead.

The principal is dynamic, forceful and renowned (see also article on Page 1). It was only two years ago that he and Bowie High School made the front page of *The Wall Street Journal* with the headline: "Matter of Principle - High School in El Paso Gives the Border Patrol A Civil Rights Lesson" (1993). It was then that U.S. District Judge Lucius Bunton issued a restraining order barring the U.S. Border Patrol from unwarranted searches of Bowie High School students and staff.

Houston, Texas: Jane Long Middle School

Ten years ago, children from affluent families attended Jane Long Middle School in Houston. Located on the edge of Bellair where the governor of Texas has a home, and many of the city's power brokers live, it was a school of choice for those who had choices.

When the bottom fell out of the Texas economy, many of the newly affluent families lost their shirts, their houses and condominiums. As they moved out, the domino effect continued: Exclusive retailers closed their shops, and land prices plummeted. Apartments were scooped up by new landlords for cents on the dollar.

At almost the same time, newly arrived immigrants, most of them Hispanic, were settling in the area. They knew little about the city, much less about the infrastructure, and they began to send their children to Jane Long Middle School. In only a few years, the school that was built in the 1950s would be reeling from change and uncertainty. Two out of three students were now recent immigrants. The teachers had known for many years that the student population was changing, and faculty needed to figure out what to do.

Fortunately for the school, the former principal returned after a short time serving at central office administration (see also article on Page 1). He knew that restructuring and renewal for Jane Long Middle School was needed. He already had the trust and respect from the staff who had known him for many years. The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation project had come at exactly the right juncture for directed change.

The University of Texas at El Paso and The University of Houston - Downtown

The two university partners are as different as their school district counterparts are to each other. The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) is a comparatively new, up and coming university. It is fast becoming a major player in border initiatives with funding from the National Science Foundation and the Pew Foundation. Historically, the UTEP staff have a tenuous connection to school districts through consulting; there is little in the way of institutional change or broad-based connections. UTEP students are primarily middle-class, upwardly mobile immigrants giving the university little exposure to the realities and struggles of many poor immigrants.

In contrast, the University of Houston-Downtown is an older, established university with an iconoclastic air to it. It is right in the middle of downtown Houston and has adapted itself to the needs of its students, most of whom are immigrants. Read what one of its students (the project's ethnographer for the Houston site) writes about the university, calling it a "second home":

> Located in the downtown area of the city of Houston, this 10-story [university] building opens its doors every day to probably the largest number of recent immigrants and international students in the state of Texas. Well known for the extreme diversity of its student body, the University of Houston - Downtown is a world in itself. With a student population of almost 8000, this university offers not only a learning environment, but also a second home for hundreds of students coming to the United States from all over the world; students who come to this country dreaming of a good education and a better future (IDRA, 1996).

Initiatives, Activities and Outcomes

Perhaps the most important Houston initiative with immediate and direct results was the creation of an ESL component in the campus' Gifted and Talented Vanguard Program. It involved the development of alternative "definitions" and criteria for gifted and talented students, the development of strategies for monitoring ESL students' progress for eventual inclusion into the regular gifted and talented program, and the collection of process and outcome data to facilitate replication of the program in other sites.

Because of these Andrew W. Mellon Foundation-supported activities, 25 LEP recent immigrant students have participated in the more challenging courses that are part of the pre-International Baccalaureate curriculum, one version of the campus' gifted and talented program. Teachers are more receptive to identifying gifted and talented characteristics in recent immigrant students. The campus is pre-disposed and ready to have the gifted and talented program expand to include LEP students.

IDRA's role in this initiative included providing the initial "suggestion" that inclusion of immigrant students in gifted and talented programs be considered as a project of the local implementation team and bringing together the gifted and talented program representatives and ESL specialist to explore strategies for identifying the gifts and talents of students who speak a language other than English.

In the El Paso project site, one program initiative involved the entire faculty of the Guillen Middle School and the University of Texas at El Paso's (UTEP) department of education faculty. The Guillen Middle School campus was added to the El Paso collaborative. Because Guillen Middle School is a feeder school for Bowie High School, IDRA determined that its inclusion in the project would serve to strengthen and provide greater instructional support and continuity in the educational pipeline serving recent immigrants in El Paso.

The Guillen Middle School site also provided a unique opportunity to work in a re-constituted school setting and to pilot strategies for ensuring attention to immigrant related issues. One of the first initiatives was a staff development effort focusing on school renewal. A three-day renewal retreat

Creative Collaboratives *- continued on page 11*

Creative Collaboratives - *continued from page 10*

included teachers, administrators, support personnel, students, parents and community representatives. IDRA provided the initial impetus for the retreat concept as it explored options for creating a collaborative relationship between Guillen Middle School and UTEP, and it assisted in the planning and documentation of the retreat. IDRA has extensive experience in renewal given our teacher renewal institute and Educator's Perspective Inventory (EPI), an instrument measuring the need for personal and professional renewal.

The involvement of teachers and administrators in the renewal activity has brought renewed vigor in meeting the needs of recent immigrant students. The impact of this should not be underestimated given the fact that the vast majority of Guillen Middle School students are immigrants. The retreat also provided a rare opportunity for school personnel to interact with students and parents in a unique context that fostered mutual understanding and frank exchanges. Already evident is a notable shift in the participants' mindsets and creation of a positive collective consciousness that will move the school forward in positive new directions. This is based on a commitment to having all students, including those who are new arrivals to this country, be successful.

Emergent Findings and Lessons Learned

You do not become a leader in cutting-edge educational policies and practices without gaining some insights along the way. When IDRA began the Texas Immigrant Education Collaborative, we had 20 years of firsthand, "in the trenches" experience with schools, parents, communities and policy makers. We were experienced leaders in immigrant issues. It also helped that many IDRA staff are children of immigrants and had their own educational experiences as such. The children for whom we speak were once us.

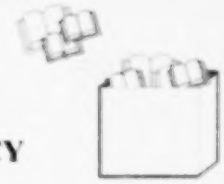
As we began our work with the collaborative, we knew the importance of context. We knew that schools in Texas have been undergoing dramatic changes in the relationships between central office staff and campus personnel with local schools asserting greater control over campus-based initiatives as a result of legislatively-mandated site-based decision making authority. We also knew that, though Texas schools have had a long history of dealing with immigrant issues, some educators are somewhat reluctant to deal with students who have recently arrived in the United States, in part because of an emerging state emphasis on school outcomes and an increased public and community focus on school and student accountability for results. Though not gripped in the anti-immigrant mania reflected in California, Texas' lack of funding for facilities, coupled with growing enrollments in some South Texas and urban areas, has created stresses in local district operations.

In addition to our existing insights about Texas schools, IDRA's long history of actively supporting community involvement provided a base for understanding an array of community issues. We knew that schools had traditionally struggled in their attempts to expand communication with parents and have struggled even more so with immigrant parents. We also recognized that communications between schools and the private sector have been limited, and minimal linkages existed between our target schools and the local colleges and universities.

Because of the long-standing

Creative Collaboratives - *continued on page 12*

A two-day regional workshop



La Caja De Cuentos:
The Story Box Approach to Accelerating Biliteracy

- Experience bilingual children's literature that **motivates students and builds TAAS skills**
- Build on **authentic cultural and life experiences** for your reading and writing curriculum
- Extend stories into **all areas of the curriculum**
- **Use technology as a tool** for enhancing a holistic language arts program
- Learn classroom management techniques for **maximum interaction and skills acceleration**

Making Books Come Alive – Students learn to read by reading, reading lots and lots of books. Therefore motivating students to read is of critical importance for student success. Dr. Chris Green and Ms. Juanita Garcia, IDRA trainers, will share with you highly practical ways to interest students in fiction and non-fiction texts and to **build TAAS reading and writing skills** in context. They will show you ways to use **cooperative structures for language arts** lessons that foster interdependence, increase simultaneous interaction, ensure individual accountability and promote equal participation. They will demonstrate exciting ways to **extend the literature read into creative writing, the visual and dramatic arts, and all the content areas** including math, science and social studies.

Designed for: All grade kindergarten through eighth grade classroom teachers, campus administrators, bilingual and ESL educators, reading and bilingual specialists, Title I teachers and central office supervisors.

June 19-20, 1996 (Session I) or July 30-31, 1996 (Session II)
The IDRA Center
Cost is $150 per person
For more information or to register, contact IDRA at 210/684-8180.

Texas Immigrant Education Collaborative: Some Lessons Learned

- Teachers need extensive support in changing their teaching strategies and school structures in ways that allow them to be more responsive to immigrant pupil needs.
- In addition to ESL teachers, other secondary level teaching staff need to be familiar with language development theory and its impact on students' ability to grasp content area instruction. ESL staff should modify instructional strategies to include grouping, cooperative learning and other approaches commonly used at the elementary level to support language development instruction.
- ESL is a special program incorporated into the elementary teacher training curriculum with little or no integration of the topic into secondary school teacher training programs. This finding confirms the need for an expanded staff development initiative designed to help current secondary level ESL teachers re-tool in order to adapt ESL instruction to the unique needs of immigrant students with varying levels of formal schooling. A parallel effort must focus on developing adaptation strategies for content area teachers working with immigrant students who have limited proficiency in English.
- A potentially specialized secondary level teacher preparation strand is needed but is actually not in any stage of development at most Texas colleges and universities.
- The linkage between institutions is best created by engaging the institutions in a collaboration where each must play inter-connected roles.
- Linking across levels is much more effective if it is focused on a specific initiative in which middle and high school levels are required to communicate and collaborate.
- Despite endorsement from the university president level, translation of administrative "approval" into actual institutional changes is a long-term process that must be shepherded through the internal workings of the university system.
- Active engagement of the principal in the design and implementation of campus-based innovations is critical, particularly in the case of immigrant students who are seen by many as an almost invisible facet of the student population.
- Immigrant education efforts must engage not only campus level leaders, but also include central office staff. This is particularly important in systems transitioning to decentralized decision making, since the central office, though relinquishing some authority over campus operations, maintains oversight responsibilities in such areas as designation of campus leadership, curriculum and budget functions.

Creative Collaboratives *- continued from page 11*

involvement of the state and the region in serving immigrant pupils, the participating sites in El Paso and Houston were not new to immigrant education issues.

In the 18 months that the Texas Immigrant Education Collaborative has existed and become part of the educational landscapes in El Paso and Houston, we and our partners have gained insight into the process of change. Some of what we uncovered was anticipated based on our knowledge and past experiences. But there were a few surprises along the way. We knew the path going in; we now know where the "landmines" are. What we have learned is summarized in the box on the left.

The literature is replete with "projects" created and sustained from external sources whose skeletons litter the educational landscapes, victims of the "Let me show you how its done" syndrome. While the research has clearly pointed to the shortcomings of externally posed reform, there is limited information on what constitutes the necessary balance between external catalysts and internal transformation. Around the issue of immigrant education reform at the secondary level, there are no models. We, therefore, struggle to define the parameters on an ongoing basis, documenting our paths as we proceed.

While much has already occurred in the first 18 months of this project including the emergence of new structures, linkages and instructional practices, much remains to be done. Confounding factors such as school staff turnover, anti-immigrant sentiment and the natural resistance to change have the potential of eroding the progress made to date. Counteracting these factors is the commitment of the project participants to their students, particularly recent immigrant students and their families. This project has heightened their awareness of the need for change and validated their belief that change is both possible and sustainable.

Resources

Intercultural Development Research Association (unpublished report) (1996).

Sciences, S. "Mexico: Peso's Drop Means Dollar Buys More. But Ciudad Juarez' Gain is El Paso's Loss," *USA Today* (January 27, 1995), p. 1.

The Wall Street Journal (February 23, 1993) Southwest Edition.

Josie D. Supik is director of the IDRA Division of Research and Evaluation. Dr. Albert Cortez is director of the IDRA Institute for Policy and Leadership and acting director of the IDRA Division of Professional Development.

Perspective - continued from page 1

each site (see articles on Pages 3 and 4).

About the Schools and Principals

Bowie High School is a large urban high school with an enrollment of 1658 students, 99.9 percent of whom are of Mexican background and 12 percent of whom are recent immigrants. The school is located in the Segundo Barrio which has long been a port of entry for Mexican immigrants. The land Bowie is built on actually belonged to Mexico in recent decades due to the meandering of the Rio Grande River. In 1973, the Chamizal Treaty settled the territorial dispute, and Bowie High School was built on part of the land that reverted to the United States. The campus is unique because it resembles a junior college more than a traditional high school, with separate buildings and a common area with memorials and statues (see also article on Page 3).

Paul Strelzin has been the principal of Bowie High School for four years and prides himself on Bowie High School's academic achievements and the activities it provides for students. The school's calculator club, math team, drama department, mariachis and ballet folórico are well known throughout the region and the state. Paul is a native of Brooklyn, New York, but considers himself a naturalized "El Pasoan." He is an advocate of immigrant education and has a long history of fighting for educational equity for Hispanic and minority students in El Paso. He is a frequent speaker on educational issues.

Guillen Middle School was formerly Bowie High School. In 1973, when the new Bowie High School building was opened, the old building became Guillen Middle School. The school originally opened in 1922 and is one of the oldest schools in El Paso. It has an enrollment of 950 students, 100 percent of whom are Hispanic in origin and 16 percent of whom are classified as recent immigrants. The school serves students in grades seven and eight.

Guillen Middle School has the distinction of having been reconstituted, or "rebuilt from the ground up," within the last year. Last spring, the El Paso district superintendent closed the school and required all faculty and staff to reapply for their jobs. All positions were open to anyone who wished to apply and wished to work toward forging a "new Guillen" that would improve student academic performance and be more responsive to the needs of the community (see also article on Page 3).

Tonie Kreye, formerly the assistant principal at Bowie High School, was selected as the new principal of Guillen Middle School. Tonie has assembled a staff of committed educators who share a common vision regarding where the school will be in the year 2000. Tonie is Mexican American and grew up in the Segundo Barrio, graduated from Bowie High School and believes deeply in returning some of what she has gained to her community. She says she is a product of the Segundo Barrio and is extremely proud to be able to work as a school principal and serve as a role model to students.

She says, "I want my students to realize that anything is possible if we want it bad enough, but also that education and determination are two ingredients necessary to achieve our goals."

Guillen Middle School faculty are working closely with faculty from the University of Texas at El Paso who are aiding them in their restructuring effort as part of the Texas Immigrant Education Collaborative.

Jane Long Middle School is located in southwest Houston in an area known as Bellaire that was once an enclave for young professionals until the oil bust of the 1980s. The abundant apartment buildings in the area are now home to hundreds of immigrant families who have changed the character of the neighborhood. The school has an enrollment of 1700 students, 50 percent of whom are recent immigrants. Jane Long Middle School is an international school with students from 30 different nationalities in attendance. Seventy-two percent of the students are of Hispanic origin, 15 percent are Anglo American, 5 percent are African American and 6 percent are classified as other (see also article on Page 3).

The principal, Clyde Hough, is in his first year as the principal of Jane Long Middle School and is an energetic advocate for immigrant education. He has a vision for the education of immigrant students that includes academic and social support through a variety of school services. An example of such support is the Jane Long Middle School medical clinic which was recently donated by a local hospital and is staffed by a nurse practitioner, a social worker and doctor who sees students free of charge.

Despite the many complexities involved in educating immigrant students, these three principals have taken the initiative to implement policies and programs that nurture and support immigrant students as they adjust to a new language, culture and school system. They all share the common belief that immigrant students can succeed academically given the proper support. The following responses from the three principals were obtained in interviews we conducted with them this spring regarding their views on immigrant education (***Q*** - questioner, ***CH*** - Clyde Hough, ***TK*** - Tonie Kreye, ***PS*** - Paul Strelzin).

Q: *Reflecting on your course work and your course of study, were you adequately prepared to deal with a school with large immigrant populations?*

PS: In a nut shell, no. No course work that I ever took in my master's in education and then in my midmanagement certificate ever prepared me for dealing with immigrant students.

CH: My formal training in midmanagement did not deal with specific issues of immigrant education, only with at-risk students in general. Even as recently as three years ago when I attended a Harvard principal's seminar, not one word was mentioned about immigrant education. Very little was mentioned about limited-English-proficient (LEP) students in general.

TK: [Emphatically] Not at all! I don't know if anybody can teach one to be sensitive, but I think that if we were to have a class where issues on immigrant students or immigrant populations are addressed, that might make us more sensitive to their plight. We need to know about educational concepts in Mexico so that we can understand where the students are coming from and not feel that, because they are coming from Mexico, they are dumb, so we're going to put them in the dummy class. That attitude, unfortunately, is all too common.

Q: *What information have you gained that you think other administrators need to know in order to meet the needs of immigrant students?*

Perspective *- continued on page 14*

COMING UP!

In June-July, the *IDRA Newsletter* focuses on math and science education.

Perspective - continued from page 13

[The areas in which the three principals felt accommodations need to be made to provide appropriate services for immigrant students were the following: registration, student records, assessment and placement, and counseling services.]

PS: Well, I think that more time needs to be set aside for immigrant student intake and registration. A lot of administrators want to do registration very quickly. I guess you get a badge and win a medal if you're that guy who can do the registration and send someone through the line in 20 minutes. Registration for an incoming immigrant student is not going to get done in a half hour. It's going to take many hours in the course of a day. There are a lot of things that need to be accomplished, so you have to be prepared to put the time and the effort into it and to have a full staff ready and able.

Upcoming Events

Workshop on Workshops (WOW)

Presented by:
Intercultural Development Research Association

June 10-11, 1996
Austin, Texas
preceding the Texas Elementary Association (TEPSA) Summer Work Conference

June 26-27, 1996
The Center at IDRA
San Antonio, Texas

Cost: $150 per person

Contact IDRA to register or get details, 210/684-8180.

"Achieving Academic Excellence in Our Multicultural Schools"

Presented by
the Common Destiny Alliance and the Center for Multicultural Education, University of Washington

June 27-29, 1996
Washington, D.C.

For more information, call 301/405-2341.

CH: My observations have been that you have to modify placement procedures and spend time interviewing parents and students about educational careers. You'll find that sometimes there are significant gaps – [such as] two or three years – because of where they lived. Social disruptions that some students may have experienced in Central America for example, also contribute to these educational gaps.

Our traditional LEP program is set up for kids from Mexico. Those kids adapt well. The ones from large cities adapt quickly to [U.S.] American culture. They have relatives and friends here. However, the kids from Central America, the Middle East and Africa have a far greater level of adjustment to make. People don't leave their homeland if they're comfortable. They leave for a reason. Our ancestors left their homelands because of lack of opportunity, social upheaval and war. They left to find a better place.

TK: Well, many of them don't have records with them. If they come from a rural school, they hardly ever have records with them. If they come right across the border from Juarez schools, they do have their records with them, but our ESL counselor sits down and talks to the parents and we let them know what the policies are. We let them know about residency policies. We don't ask for any sort of INS documentation. We let them know however, that the address they give us will be checked, because we're very clear with regard to the policies of the district.

PS: What, primarily, you are asking the student for is a birth certificate, a shot record and a record from a previous school. Administrators used to ask for proof of citizenship which cannot be done. It's not up to a high school or grade school administrator to ask a child their citizenship. It's none of our business, and, really what it basically comes down to is, we can't deny children attendance at our school if they are homeless and tell us that they live in our area.

We had a family that came into El Paso and stayed with a Catholic Services Annunciation House. They fled Nicaragua where both parents were killed. The students didn't stop off at the local school to get a drop out record.

We find it very difficult to obtain records. We aren't afraid to make phone calls even to Mexico or even South America. The key thing is we need to have at least a birth certificate so we know where we stand as far as chronological age, and then we deal from there. Records are very, very tough to come by.

CH: If a kid has records, he or she falls into the guidelines. If not, he or she is placed in a chronologically age appropriate grade level. Another option is the newcomers class which is comprised of students who are under schooled recent immigrants. There, they learn English and fill in skill gaps.

Q: *What is involved in checking the student's address?*

TK: We have a field worker who goes out and checks to make sure that the address that was given is one that the parent and the student occupies. He goes there anytime between 5:00 a.m. or 10:00 a.m. If they are not residing at the address that they give us, then I have an option as a principal to ask for records of bill payments and tell them they need to make residency here legal.

PS: We have field workers that go on home visits. Most parents work, so it's difficult to find anyone at home. We go there many times. In a case where a student is found not to be living at the address, we give them five days to appeal due to an extenuating circumstance.

Q: *How are immigrant students appropriately placed in classes?*

PS: That's a very difficult issue, but there at Bowie, we find it fairly easy because we have a large number of classes that we can place an immigrant student in. We have different programs such as the High Intensity Language Training (HILT) program and our newcomer program for under schooled recent immigrants.

I think a lot of administrators will find it very difficult to place immigrant students in the right classroom setting. Age and grade placement are not the way to go. You must place a student on where ability lies, and a lot of administrators in secondary schools don't want to be bothered with that. They get a child who is 16 years old and they immediately say, "OK, put him in a freshman class"; "Put him in a sophomore class, give him a mixed number of credits." That's not the way to do it. You've got to place them not chronologically but according to their ability level so they don't fall behind.

TK: At our school, we have an ESL counselor who speaks to the parents and in an informal interview to see where the student is coming from. If, after the interview, we feel that the student belongs in the newcomers program we place him or her there pending

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the district testing.

CH: If a student has been in school and has a working knowledge of English, he or she is placed in ESL Level 1. If the student comes in and has gaps, or he or she has a functional literacy level in the home language, he or she is placed in the newcomers class. That student's goal is to move into the beginning ESL class. Some students can go into ESL Level 1, 2 or 3. If a student is struggling in ESL 1, he or she is an ideal candidate for the newcomers class.

There is a district-wide placement system for all LEPs. Rather than reinvent the system, we add to or build in steps to identify kids that fall outside the guidelines. We provide the extensive interview option to the standard LAS [Language Assessment Scale] test.

[Note: All three sites have different methods of assessing their students. Language assessment is not an exact science, and the results of any language assessment instrument may need to be adjusted. Students should be monitored for a given period to observe the appropriateness of class placement. During that time, adjustments can be made to placement decisions. The Newcomers Centers have provided a valuable curriculum option for instructing under schooled students. Students may attend for one year, after which time, they transition to regular ESL classes.]

Q: *What kind of counseling services are available, or should be available, for recent immigrant students?*

PS: We have more programs than a lot of schools because we have been able to use Title I funds and funds from other grants and to work with IDRA and the Mellon Foundation. So we have been able to bring on more counselors. We have two counselors *per se* who work with our ESL students and newcomer students. We also have two at-risk coordinators assigned to that program alone. So we're doing more counseling, and we feel that we need to do a lot of counseling with these new students. Resources mean that you need extra counselors, extra personnel to work with students.

CH: Of our four counselors, three are bilingual, one per grade level. The sixth grade counselor is not bilingual, however the sixth grade assistant principal is bilingual. The at-risk coordinator helps to fill in the gaps. Also, as part of a partnership, we have a full-time social worker who provides us with a link to the home.

Q: *Will you speak to the issue of what the social and family needs of recent immigrant students are and how you are trying help students in this area?*

PS: You get an immigrant student, and you just don't put them in a classroom. You have to find out: Do they have clothes to wear? Do the parents need a job? Do we need to go out and help them? Do they have the water on in their house? Are they wearing the right type of shoes? Do they have the right type of clothes for this climate?

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HIGHLIGHTS OF RECENT IDRA ACTIVITIES

In March, IDRA worked with **4,735** teachers, administrators and parents through **90** training and technical assistance activities and **72** program sites in **13** states. Topics included:

- Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program Implementation
- Teaching Content: ESL Strategies
- Math and Science Circles
- Adult Literacy Outreach Innovations
- Gender and Racial Bias
- Hijas del Quinto Sol
- Chapter 89 Requirements

Participating agencies and school districts include:

- Buffalo Island, Arkansas
- New Orleans Parish, Louisiana
- Eagle Pass Independent School District (ISD)
- Ector County ISD
- Gallup-McKinley County Schools, New Mexico
- Tyler ISD
- Weslaco ISD

IDRA staff provides services to:

- public school teachers
- parents
- administrators
- other decision-makers in public education

Services include:

- training and technical assistance
- evaluation
- serving as expert witnesses in policy settings and court cases
- publishing research and professional papers, books, videos and curricula.

For information on IDRA services for your school district or other group, contact IDRA at 210/684-8180.

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In 95 percent of the cases there's a monetary problem in immigrant homes. So we need to educate administrators and teachers that it's just a lot more than classroom work. We need to be attuned to the social services needed.

CH: There are some big things that we see. For many of the immigrant families from Central America and Africa, this is a very overwhelming, urban environment. A huge urban school system, large schools. Long [Middle School] is larger than many of the villages they come from. In order to support the family unit, the kids quickly adapt to [U.S.] American culture and urban scene. They are quick to learn verbal English. You start to see role reversals. The kids become interpreters at clinics, for the apartment manager, etc. The role of the student expands, and they begin to assume adult responsibilities. Many are not prepared for this. They sometimes take advantage of the parents' lack of knowledge. We've responded to that by ensuring that we have bilingual counselors and teachers and a bilingual social worker. The social worker works very closely with the families, offering assistance not only with responsibilities, but also providing support and helping parents to maintain their effectiveness as parents.

TK: Immigrant families are in need of an array of social services that are not traditionally provided by the school. You have to go to outside agencies for that, and that is very difficult because of the cutbacks in social services. For those that remain, there is a very long waiting list. We're trying to meet some of our parents' needs through our very strong PTA that is providing parenting classes. The focus of the classes is to inform them where they can go to obtain help in such areas as getting their medical records brought up to date and where they can go when they find themselves in a crisis.

Q: *What characteristics do you look for in hiring faculty to work with immigrant students?*

TK: The first thing I look for is somebody who knows the community, because if you don't know who you service, how can you meet their needs? Another question I ask is, what strategies are you going to use to help students not only cope with a change in curriculum but also a change in environment and language? Another thing I look for is their commitment to after school extracurricular activities because a lot of these kids don't have much to go home to. So, if you are willing to sponsor a club, if you're willing to do something extracurricular, that's also an indication that you are willing to work. The fact that you care enough to take time from your everyday 8:00 to 3:30 job is indicative that if you don't know enough, you are willing to learn.

One of the things that I've asked my faculty to obtain is an ESL endorsement. Since we are essentially an ESL school where all students speak English as a second language, all our teachers need to know how to teach content based ESL. Eventually, I would like everyone to get a gifted and talented endorsement. I would like to discontinue the honors classes and have everyone teach a gifted and talented curriculum. The higher the expectations, the higher students will reach.

The views of these three successful principals who are creating innovations in immigrant education demonstrate how educators need to be responsive to students' situations. While they did not receive formal instruction or preparation on "best practices" in immigrant education, they have been guided by sound principles regarding the education of limited-English-proficient students and a vision of schooling that produces success for all students. They provide a lead that others would do well to follow. We, at IDRA, feel fortunate to be associated with them through the Texas Immigrant Education Collaborative and thank them for sharing their views.

Resources

Center for Applied Linguistics. *Program in Immigrant Education* (Washington, D.C., 1996).

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